Notes

Introduction

1. Many different terms have been used in reference to these movements – some more astute or accurate than others. In my opinion, the term 'assembly movements' (Butler 2015) is insufficient as it emphasises a specific aspect that was shared by many, but definitely not all, of these movements (i.e. the General Assembly as a platform of organisation and decision-making), and the often-used reference to 'global movements' (Sitrin and Azzelini 2014) is both too generic and tends to exaggerate the international or 'global' character of these movements. I will instead use the term 'occupy movements' in reference to a broad range of movements – from the so-called 'Arab Spring' to the 15-M movement and from Occupy Wall Street and Occupy London Stock Exchange to the Gezi Park protests, Nuit Debout and the Sudanese revolution of 2018, to name but a few examples. One of the most distinctive features shared by all of them, after all, is the occupation of public space as a shared technique and symbolic expression.
2. 'Les conseils étaient regardés comme une préfiguration de la société socialiste' (Guérin 1965: 129). Guérin arguably used the term 'prefiguration' more loosely than (for instance) Carl Boggs. For instance, he elsewhere describes the repression of the Kronstadt rebellion by the Bolshevists in 1921 as a 'préfiguration de Budapest' in 1956 (Guérin 1965: 121).

Chapter 1

1. It may be debatable if the various organisations and unions named below should be qualified as syndicalist, revolutionary syndicalist or anarcho-syndicalist. Whereas some sources stress the strategic and ideological differences between various syndicalist unions such as CGT, CNT and IWW (Damier 2009; Marshall 1993: 500–1), and others focus

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on intersections and mutual influence between anarchist and syndicalist tendencies (Solidarity Federation 2012), still other sources stress that the difference between these various tendencies must not be exaggerated, as they all stem from the same syndicalist tradition that found its origin in the anti-authoritarian wing of the First International (Schmitt and Van der Walt 2009: 159–60).

2. It must be stressed, however, that the feminist credo 'the personal is political' often goes misinterpreted. As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2017: 9) argues, '[t]his slogan was not just about "lifestyle" issues, as it came to be popularly understood, rather it was initially about how the experiences within the lives of Black women shaped their political outlook'.
3. Engels was by no means the first author to use this phrase, yet in his political thought it arguably did acquire a particular meaning. For a genealogy of the idea that politics must be replaced with 'the administration of things', see Kafka (2012).

Chapter 3

1. It must be stressed that the terms 'assembly' and 'council' are used in very different ways – and in reference to various kinds of institutions. First, the term 'assembly' is also used in reference to formal parliamentary bodies representing popular sovereignty (e.g. the 'National Assembly' in France). It must be clear that this is something rather different from the temporary public assemblies discussed in the previous sections. However, in other accounts (e.g. Bookchin 2015), the public or popular assembly is presented as a durable institution, where members of a community (for instance, a neighbourhood) meet on a regular basis to discuss political matters. The assembly then delegates some of its members to councils at a higher or more central level to represent its position and/or interests, on the basis of an imperative mandate. This particular concept of the assembly is not necessarily incompatible with Arendt's idea of a council system. In this chapter I use the term 'public assembly' in reference to the temporary (and often spontaneous) gatherings of bodies in public space (as we have seen in the context of recent prefigurative social movements). 'Council' stands for a more durable and formal institution (and may include some of the grassroots institutions that Bookchin and others refer to as popular or neighbourhood assemblies).
2. Arendt stresses that our contemporary concept of 'principle' is derived from the Latin *principium*, which also means 'beginning'. Any new beginning or foundation must carry 'its own principle within itself' (Arendt 2006a: 205). In other words: by beginning something new one inevitably postulates a set of principles or values that embodies the

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spirit of this beginning. This explains why, in the Roman perception, a political order always had to refer back to its original beginning, and to the principles or binding promises that were implied in it.

3. These self-selecting councils at the 'lower' or decentralised level arguably are rather similar to what other radical-democratic theorists, such as Murray Bookchin, describe as 'popular assemblies' or 'neighbourhood assemblies' (Bookchin 2015: 30).
4. Note that in the German original, Luxemburg formulates this last sentence as follows: 'Sie werden geschult indem sie zur Tat greifen' (Luxemburg 1974a: 512).
5. Again, a strikingly similar point is made by Castoriadis, who argues that the Hungarian councils of 1956 both sought to alter the 'institution of society' and at the same time provided themselves with 'some of the means for doing it' (Castoriadis 1993: 254; see Popp-Madsen 2021 for an elaborate comparison between Arendt and Castoriadis).

Chapter 4

1. It should be stressed, however, that at this point the interpretations of Laclau's position tend to diverge. Stefan Rummens and Mark Wenman, for example, have a significantly different reading of the synecdochal moment in Laclau – which, according to them, defines the very distinction between Laclau's populist defence of hegemony on the one hand, and Mouffe's advocacy for an 'agonistic pluralism' on the other. Rummens argues that 'in a democratic regime, the collectivity of the temporary majority simply cannot and should not be identified with the collectivity of the people-as-a-whole, encompassing both the majority *and* the minority'. But, he asserts, 'in the synecdochal movement in which a particular claims to represent the universal, the distinction between these two collectivities is suppressed' (Rummens 2009: 382–3). Rummens therefore concludes that in a hegemonic embodiment of the whole by one of its parts, 'the losers are delegitimised as representatives of the people' (Rummens 2009: 381). In a similar vein, Wenman argues that 'the monism implied in the (post-)Marxist notion of synecdoche' is incompatible with a pluralist, radical democracy (Wenman 2003: 592) and that Laclau's 'conscription of particularistic struggles into the ontologically necessary role of forever attempting to impersonate the universal is a violation of personal freedom' (Wenman 2003: 601). I suspect, however, that both Rummens and Wenman read Laclau's concept of hegemony too much in terms of a 'regime', rather than an ongoing movement. It is precisely on *this* plane that a distinction between Laclau and Mouffe could be drawn. Whereas for Mouffe 'hegemony' first and foremost implies a 'stabilization of power' (Mouffe 2005a: 104), Laclau presents it as a *process*, in which 'a contingent group within a given

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society . . . "takes upon itself the task"' to embody or 'stand for' this society as a whole (Miller 2004: 218). In this respect, Laclau's theory of hegemonisation and synecdochal representation indeed is more helpful if we want to understand the prefigurative politics of contemporary protest movements.

2. A literal example of this is the Estallido Social: a wave of civic protests that emerged Chile in 2019. Whereas it originally started as a fare evasion campaign to protest against the raising price of public transport, demonstrators would soon contest a broader set of policies, police brutality and social inequality more generally (Johanson 2019).
3. It might seem counter-intuitive to draw on Laclau's thought in this context. Both Laclau (2014c: 9) and his co-author Chantal Mouffe (2013) have strongly criticised these movements for their perceived refusal to engage with representative politics. My claim, however, is that their work could nevertheless be employed in an analysis of these very movements and their prefigurative practices (Decreus et al. 2014: 138; Van de Sande 2019).
4. wearethe99percent.tumblr.com (accessed 11 April 2022).

Chapter 5

1. In the third edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the term appears eight times, either as a verb or a noun. See Arendt (1968f: xv (twice), 53, 55, 94, 222, 365, 440).
2. Kant uses the word *Anschießen*, which could best be translated as 'shooting together'. See Kant (1995: 241 §58).
3. Arendt gives a full quotation from Shakespeare (1934: 1140) earlier on in the essay (1968e: 193):

> Full fathom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are coral made,
> Those are pearls that were his eyes,
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

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